



The Casebook of Sherlock Holmes

Adventure LV – The Adventure of the Three Gables

Did you think that Sherlock Holmes was a bit rude and crude in last week's story, "The Mazarin Stone?" Well, this week the Master picks up right where he left off, and the results are not pretty. Perhaps it would be easier to tolerate his puerile sarcasm towards Steve Dixie and Susan Stockdale if we could see that he was doing his best for his client, but the Sherlock Holmes of "The Three Gables" is as ineffective as he is annoying! Still, he's Sherlock Holmes, and I hope we will find some good Hounds who will NOT run silent, and that we can all survive this "Harrow-ing" adventure without defiling our wells of speech and civility. In a moment, the week's comments and questions on "The Three Gables."

Guilt by association: I am a bit confused by the organization of the "Spencer John" gang. Steve Dixie reported to Barney Stockdale, and we assume that Barney reported to the head of the gang. However, Barney and his wife Susan also worked for Isadora Klein on what seems to have been a fairly regular basis. Is such criminal moonlighting a likely situation? Was "Spencer John" really Frau Klein's nom de guerre? Was Isadora Klein behind the "killing of young Perkins outside the Holborn Bar?" Was Perkins a suitor who didn't get the hint after his first beating?

The story doesn't tell us how long Susan Stockdale had been posing as a maid at the Three Gables. But why didn't Isadora Klein have her search for the manuscript instead of going through all that other trouble?

Holmes spoke glowingly of Douglas Maberley, but from what we know of him, was he really the kind of man Holmes would have admired?

Watson wrote that Holmes was in "a chatty mood" at the beginning of the case. Was he taking cocaine again? Was the drug responsible for his ungentlemanly behavior?



The de-Klein and fall: The worst mistake Holmes made in this case was his failure to arrange for Mrs. Maberley's protection. When he asked her if her lawyer was "a capable man," the context was such that she undoubtedly assumed Holmes was referring to Sutro's legal skills. As it happens, Sutro was somewhat elderly himself and would not have been sufficient protection even if Mrs. Maberley had asked him to spend the night. Holmes later said he should have left Watson on guard, and that would have certainly been better – though perhaps not for Watson! Why didn't Holmes arrange for a police presence, such as the trap he laid for Beppo in "The Six Napoleons?"

Why didn't Holmes offer to go through Douglas Maberley's luggage? Even though he may not have known exactly what he was looking for until after he spoke with Langdale Pike, the chances are that he might have guessed the importance of the manuscript if he had seen it. Why didn't he at least take a look? Why leave Mrs. Maberley to do it herself, especially since she obviously had no idea what was going on?

Holmes resolved the case by extorting money from Isadora Klein. Was this the best he could do, or should he have tried to have her prosecuted for the crimes involved in the theft of the manuscript?

Holmes was an introspective and thoughtful man, and we must imagine that he later reflected on this case with chagrin. Do you think his sloppy handling of this one may have influenced his decision to retire? Or was he sloppy because he had already made up his mind to get out of the detective game?

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